

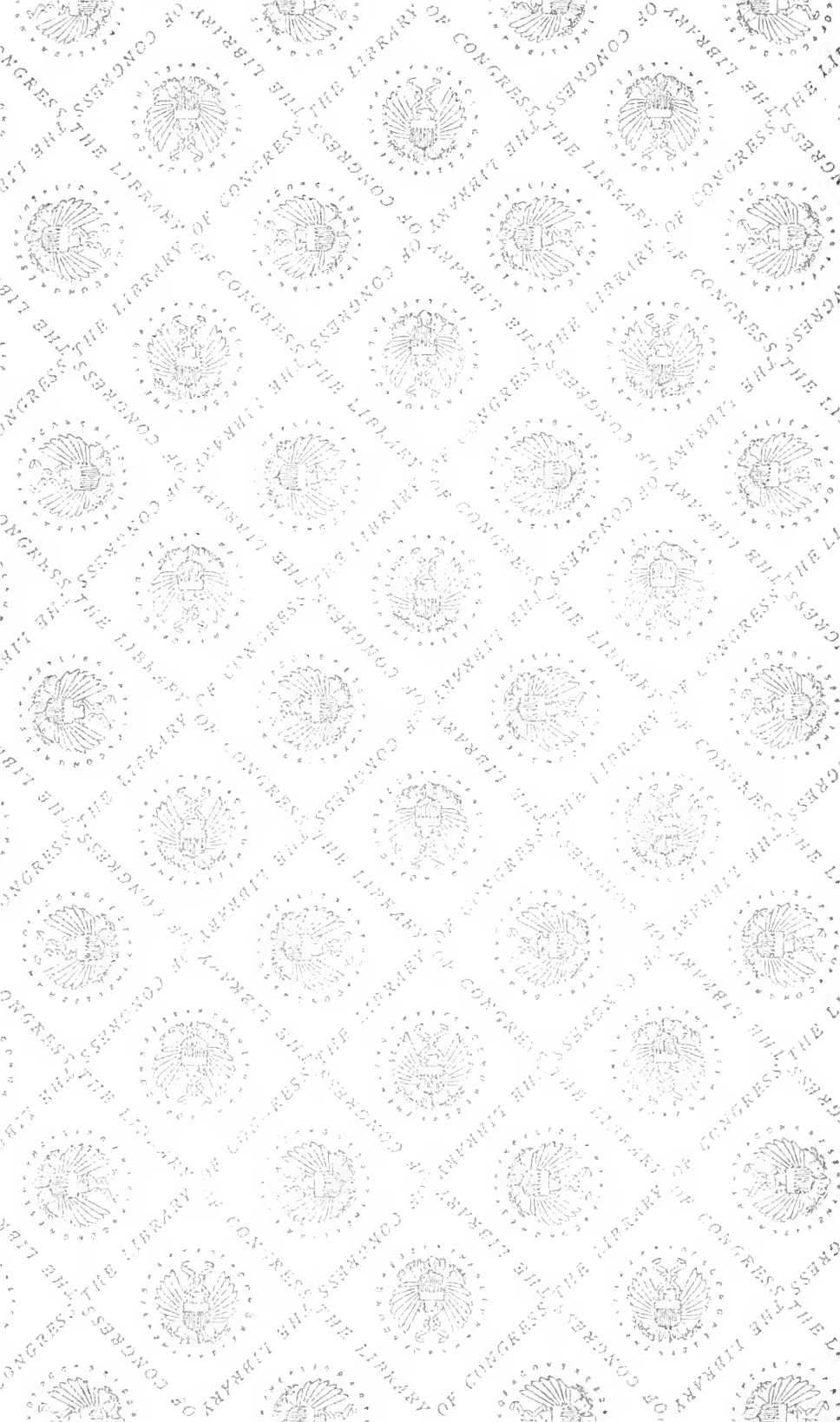
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CHRISTOPHER

COLUMBUS.



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# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

—AN—

Historical Spectacle—Presenting the most Magnificent Scenes and

Dramatic Events in Connection with the Discovery of America—

Arranged for Presentation during the World's Fair at Chicago.

—BY—

**M. L. LITTLETON,**

**NASHVILLE, TENN.**

**1891.**

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# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

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AN HISTORICAL SPECTACLE.

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## ACT I.

### IMAGINATION.

SCENE—*In the suburbs of Genoa.* A wool-comber's cottage; the father of Columbus combing wool. A distant street, with houses, churches, etc. Bell rings angelus, and two women fall on their knees at prayer. Under a large tree, beside a stream, is stretched a youth, in reverie. Books, charts are thrown about him. It is Columbus, dreaming of great achievements. Beside him crouches a dog in dumb subjection to the latent power of the youth. About him float fantastic forms, the imagination of the youth.

HISTORICAL AUTHORITY.—“It was the twilight of geographical knowledge. Imagination went hand in hand with discovery.”

—*Washington Irving.*

*Dance of Fancy.* Twenty-one blonde maidens in gossamer robes of seven skirts, the seven colors of the rainbow, with wings and peaked caps of the same delicate hued gossamer, with wands, dance to Swiss bells played by the Swiss bell-ringers.

## ACT II.

### THE INSPIRATION OF COLUMBUS.

HISTORICAL AUTHORITY.—*Washington Irving*: “Columbus felt himself to be kindled with fire as from heaven, and considered himself the agent chosen by heaven to accomplish its grand designs. The ends of the earth were to be brought together, and all nations and tongues and languages united under the banners of the Redeemer. This was to be the triumphant consummation of his enterprise, bringing the remote and unknown regions of the earth into communion with Christian Europe; carrying the light of the true faith into benighted and pagan lands, and gathering their countless nations under the holy dominion of the church.”

SCENE—*The sea coast.* A long rocky stretch of land on the sea coast. A wild, lonely, desolate scene, with the waves of the ocean lashing the shore in sullen supplication. Columbus (about 30 years of age) stands with his hands outstretched, his eyes uplifted, his whole bearing is impressive with power. A light emanates from his countenance. At the rear of the stage heavenly visitants appear to him.

FIRST VISION. The Queen of Angels, crowned with lilies, escorted by Angels, and holding in her hand the World shaped as a globe, and pointing to the see.

SECOND VISION. A cannibal feast, representing the ghoulish glee of cannibals around a roasting victim. Demons with instruments of torture surround the savages.

THIRD VISION. A ship manned by angels, bearing a cross, on which appears the luminous letters CHRISTIANITY. Columbus sees himself on the ship, and falling prostrate on his face, is approached by three Archangels: Raphael, who gives him the helmet of hope; Gabriel, the shield of faith, and Michael, the sword of justice.

The orchestra plays on violins and harp during these visions.

Chorus, "He shall give His angels charge over them," from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

As they fade, a chorus of Aztecs chant the prophecy of their King as to the coming of the Fair God. This prophecy may be set to the chorus by the priests of Baal in "*Elijah*."

*The Sacrificial Dance of the Aztecs.* A procession of priests, followed by a youth wreathed with flowers, and escorted to his room by dancing maidens. As this is a scene of prophecy the distant history of the New World is glimpsed in this chorus and dance.

### ACT III.

#### THE VISIT OF COLUMBUS TO THE COURT OF SPAIN.

HISTORICAL AUTHORITY.—*Washington Irving*: "The Court was thronged by the most illustrious of that war-like country and stirring era; by the flower of its nobility, by the most dignified of its prelacy, by bards and minstrels, and all the retinue of a romantic and picturesque age. There was nothing but the glittering of arms, the rustling of robes, the sound of music and festivity.

"Do you want a picture of our navigator during this brilliant and triumphant scene? It is furnished by a Spanish writer: 'A man obscure and but little known followed at this time the Court. Confounded in the crowd of importunate applicants, feeding his imagination in the corners of ante-chambers with the pompous project of discovering a world, melancholy and dejected in the midst of the general rejoicing, he beheld with indifference, and almost with contempt, the conclusion of a conquest which swelled all bosoms with jubilee, and seemed to have reached the utmost bounds of desire. That man was Christopher Columbus.'"

SCENE—*A moonlit garden of the Court of Castile.* The Southern warmth of bloom and bower; the oriental beauty of fountains and sculptured archways. Glimmering through the trees the distant Moorish palaces. Scattered throughout the garden picturesque groups of knights and ladies. A minstrel playing a harp for a group of youths and maidens reclining at his feet on rugs and cushions. From an overhanging balcony a beautiful lady flinging roses to a masked lover. A group of Jews and Arabs in a dark recess, with stiletos and faces of hatred. In the midst of gayety and splendor, Columbus, dispirited and dejected, alone, save for a fool making sport of him.

*Dance.* A royal minuet in the Court dress of the times.

## ACT IV.

### COLUMBUS AT THE CONVENT OF LA RABIDA.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION.—*Washington Irving*: "About half a league from the little seaport of Palos de Moguer in Andalusia there stood, and continues to stand at the present day, an ancient convent of Franciscan Friars, dedicated to Santa Maria de Rabida. One day a stranger on foot, in humble guise, but of distinguished air, accompanied by a small boy, stopped at the gate of the convent and asked of the porter a little bread and water for his child. While receiving this humble refreshment, the prior of the convent, Juan Perez de Marchena happening to pass by, was struck with the appearance of the stranger, and observing from his air and accent that he was a foreigner, entered into conversation with him, and soon learned the particulars of his story. That stranger was Columbus. He was greatly interested by the conversation of Columbus and struck with the grandeur of his views."

SCENE—*The plain, bare cell of a monk.* Seated at a table, examining with approval the maps and charts of Columbus, is the monk, Juan Perez de Marchena; standing near him Columbus, pale from hunger, ragged from exposure. Deigo, the little son of Columbus, voraciously devours some bread and milk. Through the door of the cell opening inward may be seen the interior of a mediæval chapel and the Franciscan monks at prayer. A procession of monks, two abreast, march through the chapel intoning the Gregorian chant.

## ACT V.

### ISABELLA OFFERS TO PLEDGE HER JEWELS.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION.—*Washington Irving*: "There was still a moment's hesitation. The King looked coldly on the affair, and the royal finances were absolutely drained by the war. Some time must be given to replenish them. How could she draw on an exhausted treasury for a measure to which the King was adverse? St. Angel watched this suspense with trembling anxiety. The next moment reassured him. With an enthusiasm worthy of herself and of the cause

Isabella exclaimed: 'I undertake the enterprise for my own crown of Castile and will pledge my jewels to raise the necessary funds.' This was the proudest moment in the life of Isabella; it stamped her reborn forever as the patroness of the discovery of the New World."

SCENE—*The camp before Grenada.* A silken pavilion, glittering with the pomp of that chivalrous age. Guards in armor; ladies in waiting. Through the door of the tent may be seen triumphant processions. The royal children are present. Seated on a couch, richly dressed, is Isabella, beautiful and gracious as an angel; filled with enthusiasm she holds out one hand overflowing with jewels, while with the other she seeks to unclasp the chain about her throat. Columbus kneels on one knee, kissing the hand of his benefactress. Standing behind Isabella, Ferdinand; and near her, his eyes fixed on Columbus with prophetic intensity, stands Pedro Gonzales de Mendoza, Archbishop of Toledo. In this scene must appear the triumph of Spain in the surrender of Granada, as it was at this time Columbus made successful application to Isabella.

*National Air of Spain.* Dance of the captive Moorish maidens. In this dance thirty dark eyed and dark haired Arab maidens, with silver chains on their wrists, dance a Moorish dance.

## ACT VI.

### THE DEPARTURE.

HISTORICAL AUTHORITY.—*Washington Irving*: "At length the vessels were ready for sea. The largest, which had been prepared expressly for the voyage and was decked, was called the Santa Maria; on board of this ship Columbus hoisted his flag. The second, called the Pianta, was commanded by Martin Alonzo Pinzon, accompanied by his brother Francisco Martin, as pilot. The third, called the Nina, had latine sails, and was commanded by the third of the brothers, Vincente Yanez Pinzon. A deep gloom was spread over the whole community of Palos at their departure, for almost every one had some relative or friend on board of the squadron. The spirits of the seamen, already depressed by their own fears, were still more cast down at the affliction of those they left behind who took leave of them with tears and lamentations and dismal forebodings, as of men they were never to behold again."

SCENE—*The Scaport of Palos.* Three caravels just launched; in the foremost one, Columbus, the flag of Spain unfurled, his whole bearing triumphant to exultation. On the shore, in picturesque costumes, the peasantry of Spain bewailing by attitudes of despair the departure of friends. One group from the court especially grieved, the lady Beatrice, guardian of his son, Deigo. In the distant background a calvacade of knights and ladies with Isabella on her Arab steed watching the departure.

ORCHESTRA. Selection from Mozart's Requiem.

Spanish Peasant Dance.

## ACT VII.

## THE MUTINY AT SEA.

HISTORICAL AUTHORITY.—*Washington Irving*: “Columbus was now at open defiance with his crew, and his situation became desperate.”

SCENE—*On deck of a ship at sea.* A tropical storm rages. The sailors pale, emaciated, ragged, leave their posts of duty and turn on Columbus to take his life. One man lies dying, others sit in despondent attitudes. Columbus, pale but resolute, faces the mutiny.

The orchestra plays “The Storm on Mt. Carmel,” from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*.

## ACT VIII.

## THE MUTINY QUELLED.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION.—*Washington Irving*: “In the evening, when—according to invariable custom on board of the Admiral’s ship—the mariners had sung the “*Salve Regina*” or vesper hymn to the Virgin, he made an impressive address to his crew and pointed out the goodness of God.”

SCENE—*On board the ship.* Columbus and his crew at prayer. The storm abated; the clouds are parted by the Star of the Sea, an angelic beauty of luminous beauty, crowned with stars and holding on her staff the brilliant star of the sea. She points to land in view; the cannon fires, the sailors shout “land ho!” and chorus of sailors chant “*Salve Regina*.”

*Sea monster’s parade.* In this parade will appear the various monsters of the deep that so terrified the sailors on their first voyage.

## ACT IX.

## THE LANDING.

HISTORICAL SCENE.—*Washington Irving*: “It was on Friday morning, the 12th of October, that Columbus first beheld the new world. As the day dawned he saw before him a level island, several leagues in extent, and covered with trees like a continual orchard. Though apparently uncultivated it was populous, for the inhabitants were seen issuing from all parts of the woods and running to the shore. They were perfectly naked, and, as they stood gazing at the ships, appeared by their attitudes and gestures to be lost in astonishment. Columbus made signal for the ships to cast anchor, and the boats to be manned and armed: He entered his own boat, richly attired in scarlet, and holding the royal standard; while Martin Alonzo Pinzon and Vincent Janez his brother, put off in company in their boats, each with a banner of the enterprise emblazoned with a green cross, having on either side the letters F. and Y., the initials of the Castilian monarchs Fernando and Ysabel, surmounted by crowns.”

SCENE—*San Salvador.* The Santa Maria is drawn near to the shore, from which rush the exulting crew. The foremost to land is a Dominican

friar who plants a large cross; he is followed by Columbus with the banner of Spain. Columbus falls on his knees and kisses the soil; other groups are arranged to express the triumph and joy of the crew.

On an overhanging rock three angels chant "Glory to God," from Handel's *Messiah*.

*Devils' Rage Dance.* The various demons, idolatry, cannibalism, human sacrifice, etc., dance a rythnless, mechanical, musicless dance. At sight of the cross they disappear with a diabolical groan into flames that rise up to receive them.

## ACT X.

### INDIAN CACIQUES PAYING TRIBUTE TO COLUMBUS.

SCENE—*An Indian Village.* Tents at whose doors sit old women. Canoes anchored in sight. A young buck tempering his arrows. They all have stopped their employment to look at Columbus, who, seated on a rock, arrayed in his admiral robes, receives tribute from the various Indian chiefs. The costumes of these chiefs will be as varied as possible, from the cotton apron to the feather armor of the higher civilized. Near Columbus, Spanish officers bartering for gold, etc., etc.

Solo and chorus: Indian song.

SECOND PART—*An Indian war dance.*

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF AN INDIAN DANCE.—*Washington Irving:* "While they were conversing a canoe arrived from another part of the island, bringing pieces of gold to be exchanged for hawk's bells; there was nothing upon which the natives set so much value as upon these toys. The Indians were extravagantly fond of the dance, which they performed to the cadence of certain songs, accompanied by the sound of a kind of drum made from the trunk of a tree, and the rattling of hollow bits of wood; but when they hung the hawk's bells about their persons and heard the clear musical sound responding to the movements of the dance, nothing could exceed their wild delight."

## ACT XI.

### THE RETURN OF COLUMBUS TO SPAIN.

SCENE—Royal saloon in the grand palace of Saragoza, in Arragon, anciently the Aljaferia, or abode of the Moorish Kings.

Given below is Irving's description of this scene:

#### AT BARCELONA.

"To receive him with suitable pomp and distinction, the sovereigns had ordered their throne to be placed in public under a rich canopy of brocade of gold in a vast and splendid saloon. Here the King and Queen awaited his arrival, seated in state, with the Prince Juan beside them, and attended by the dignitaries of their

court and the principal nobility of Castile, Valentia, Catalonia and Arragon, all impatient to behold the man who has conferred so incalculable a benefit upon the nation. At length Columbus entered the hall, surrounded by a brilliant crowd of cavaliers, among whom, says Las Casas, he was conspicuous for his stately and commanding person, which with his countenance rendered venerable by his gray hairs, gave him the august appearance of a senator of Rome; a modest smile lighted up his features showing that he enjoyed the state and glory in which he came; and certainly nothing could be more deeply moving to a mind inflamed by noble ambition, and conscious of having greatly deserved, than these testimonials of the admiration and gratitude of a nation, or rather of a world. As Columbus approached, the sovereigns rose as if receiving a person of the highest rank. Bending his knees he offered to kiss their hands, but there was some hesitation on their part to permit this act of homage. Raising him in the most gracious manner they ordered him to seat himself in their presence, a rare honor in this proud and punctilious court.

At their request he now gave an account of the most striking events of his voyage, and a description of the islands discovered. He displayed specimens of unknown birds and other animals; of rare plants of medicinal and aromatic virtues; of native gold in dust, in crude masses, or labored in barbaric ornaments; and, above all, the natives of these countries, who were objects of intense and inexhaustible interest. All these he pronounced mere harbingers of greater discoveries yet to be made, which would add realms of incalculable wealth to the dominions of their majesties and whole nations of proselytes to the true faith.

When he had finished the sovereigns sank on their knees and raising their clasped hands to heaven, their eyes filled with tears of joy and gratitude, pursed forth thanks and praises to God for so great a providence; all present followed their example; a deep and solemn enthusiasm pervaded that splendid assembly and prevented all common acclamations of triumph.

The anthem *Te Deum Laudamus*, chanted by the choir of the royal chapel, with the accompaniment of instruments, rose in a full body of sacred harmony; bearing up, as it were, the feelings and thoughts of the auditors to heaven, so that, says the venerable Las Casas, 'it seemed as if in that hour they communicated with celestial delights.' Such was the solemn and pious manner in which the brilliant court of Spain celebrated this sublime event, offering up a grateful tribute of melody and praise, and giving glory to God for the discovery of another world."

Chorus: The Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*.

Dance of Jewish maidens: The cymbal dance of Miriam and her maids.

## ACT XII.

### IMPRISONMENT AND PROPHECY.

A rude, dark, low dungeon; on a pallet of stones Columbus in chains. Resting on one elbow he gazes into the future and sees a great empire rise in symbolic vision.

FIRST VISION—From the sea rises a woman, liberty written on her

brow, a torch in her hand. To accord with the brilliant hopes and ambitions of Columbus, this goddess will be the same one that personated Isabella. About her, rise and circle thirteen virgins, (the original thirteen States,) a slender band of silver about their flowing hair.

SECOND VISION—Kings yielding their swords to George Washington.

THIRD VISION—The World's Fair in honor of Columbus. A statue of Columbus rises, above it two angels with a wreath of laurels descend to crown him, (this wreath will be made of gas jets.) The United States, a queen surpassingly magnificent, mounts the base of the statue, lays the American flag at his feet while she beckons to a bevy of foreign queens (each nation represented at the World's Fair having a queen,) to follow her in honoring the statue of Columbus. These queens bear wreaths of their national flowers; France, lillies; England, roses; Ireland, sham-rock, etc.

The orchestra plays an international fantasia, and, as the national air of each nation is distinctly heard, the Queen of that nation throws her wreath on the statue.

Dance of the United States. As "Yankee Doodle" is played the Northern States, represented by maidens in armor, enter dancing; when "Dixie" is played, the Southern States, as maidens, enter dancing; when the "Star Spangled Banner" is played they all dance together, and the last act is to fling their banners on the statue of Columbus so that its base will be buried in flags and flowers.

FINALE.

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## NOTE TO THE READER.



The costumes, scenery, and faces of the play will be taken from historical descriptions and paintings, giving to the play an historical, artistic, and musical merit aside from its popularity as a gorgeous and appropriate pageant at a time when interest in Columbus is at that stage when pageantry is a necessary expression of the popular excitement.





